

Story 1229 (Dictated)

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Konya Province

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Some Karatepe<sup>1</sup> Men and Their Salt War

One day a group of Karatepe men went to a salt market to buy salt. The village to which they went was close to the great Salt Lake in the center of Turkey. They asked the salt merchants, "Where do you get this salt?"

"Oh, we get it from the lake

As the Karatepe people were returning to Karatepe, one of them said, "If salt grows in a lake, we should throw some of this salt in our own lake. Then when we need salt again, we shall not have to travel so far for it. We can just get some out of our own lake." The others agreed with this idea. When they got back to Karatepe, they unloaded their camels and threw most of the salt into the side of the lake closest to their village, keeping only a small part of the whole load for their immediate use

A few months later, they ran out of salt again. Taking their camels, they went to the lake near their own village. There they discovered that the lake was very low, and the

<sup>1</sup>Karatepe is a remote village in the northeast corner of Adana Province. Its people are alleged to be stupid, and their misadventures are the subjects of a great number of Karatepe anecdotes.

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place where they had dumped their salt was now dry land. They searched and searched, but they could not find any salt growing there. All around that edge of the lake there were swarms of large flies, and the Karatepe people decided that those flies must have eaten their salt.

Angry at those flies, the Karatepe residents decided to kill as many of the thieves as they could. Returning to their homes, they all got their hunting rifles and began shooting at the flies along the shore of the lake. As they were doing this, a fly alighted on the forehead of one of the hunters, right between his eyes. This man whistled to his friends and gestured where the fly had landed. One of them took careful aim and shot the

The rest of the villagers back at Karatepe heard all of the gunfire on the lakeshore, and when the hunters returned, they asked, "How did the war turn out?"

One of the hunters answered, "Well, each side lost one of its members."